

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LAW AND JUSTICE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:335

ANSWERED ON:09.08.2017

Common Service Centres

Gaikwad Prof. Ravindra Vishwanath;Mahajan Smt. Poonam

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has launched an initiative to use Information Technology in order to streamline legal aid in rural areas of the country and if so, the details thereof including plans, if any, to attract legal aid clinics, lawyers and NGOs towards using Common Service Centres (CSCs) to provide assistance to rural citizens;
- (b) whether the Government plans to provide infrastructure and hardware such as internet connections, video cameras, etc. to support tele-conferencing from CSCs and reduce financial burden on rural citizens and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government will also utilise the CSCs and online platform to provide court lawyers for those persons in rural areas who may be embroiled in court cases and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the number of States linked with CSCs during the first phase of legal assistance to common people along with the time by which the remaining States are likely to be linked with such CSCs; and
- (e) the details of CSCs functioning in rural areas of the country, State-wise, and the response of rural people towards these CSCs along with the impact of these centres on lower judiciary?

Answer

ANSWER

MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE & ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) to (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 335 DUE FOR ANSWER ON AUGUST 9th, 2017

The Government has launched a "Tele Law" scheme on pilot basis, in select districts of UP, Bihar, North East and Jammu and Kashmir. The aim is to enable greater access to legal advice especially to people living in villages through the use of information technology. Poor and marginalised persons like SC/ST, women, senior citizens, victims of natural calamities, industrial workers, persons with disabilities, persons with low incomes etc. as mentioned in section 12 of the Legal Services Authority Act 1987 are eligible for legal advice under the scheme. The scheme is operationalized through the Ministry of Electronics & IT's Common Services Centres (CSCs), with special focus on those located at gram panchayat level. Lawyers have been engaged by the State Legal Services Authorities and the CSCs to provide legal advice to people through existing video conferencing facilities available at the CSCs. Para Legal Volunteers and Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) have been trained to efficiently implement the scheme. In the first phase 500 CSCs each in UP and Bihar and 800 CSCs in eight states of North East and Jammu and Kashmir have been selected for implementing this scheme as a pilot scheme. All these CSCs are adequately equipped with facilities like infrastructure and hardware such as internet connections, video cameras etc. to support teleconferencing and video conferencing. The details of State-wise CSCs is given at Annexure-I.

The Tele Law scheme is meant to supplement the existing legal aid services provided by Legal Services Authorities present at various levels across the Country who provide panel lawyers to eligible litigants free of cost. Since the scheme is launched in mid-April, 2017, as a pilot scheme, it is premature to expand in other States. As far as inclusion of legal aid clinics, NGOs and lawyers are concerned, as stated above in the scheme of things, no modification in the scheme is required as of now.

It is too early to conduct a study by the Ministry to measure the impact as the scheme has just been launched. However, the response of the rural people to the scheme is found very encouraging as nearly 1100 people have registered under the scheme for legal advice. The State-wise break-up is given at Annexure-II.

ANNEXURE –I

Total No. of CSCs Functional at Gram Panchayat level as on 30.07.2017

S. No. State No. of CSCs

1 Andhra Pradesh 3119

2 Arunachal Pradesh 44

3 Assam 1559
4 Bihar 11960
5 Chhattisgarh 7940
6 Goa 30
7 Gujarat 13885
8 Haryana 4923
9 Himachal Pradesh 1952
10 Jammu & Kashmir 900
11 Jharkhand 5295
12 Karnataka 2333
13 Kerala 1111
14 Madhya Pradesh 11873
15 Maharashtra 17788
16 Manipur 207
17 Meghalaya 74
18 Mizoram 176
19 Nagaland 138
20 Odisha 5599
21 Punjab 3464
22 Rajasthan 14878
23 Sikkim 23
24 Tamil Nadu 4646
25 Telangana 2855
26 Tripura 322
27 Uttar Pradesh 35804
28 Uttarakhand 3853
29 West Bengal 6330
State Total 163081
Union Territory
1 Andaman & Nicobar 20
2 Chandigarh 21
3 Dadra & Nagar Haveli 9
4 Daman and Diu 1
5 Delhi 0
6 Lakshadweep 2
7 Puducherry 92
UT Total 145

GRAND TOTAL 163226

ANNEXURE-II
STATE-WISE CASES REGISTERED IN TELE LAW PORTAL SEEKING LEGAL ADVICE

Sr No. Name of State No. of cases registered

1 Assam 179
2 Bihar 14
3 J&K 801
4 Manipur 15
5 Meghalaya 1
6 Mizoram 2
7 Nagaland 3
8 Sikkim 1
9 Tripura 1
10 UP 83
Total 1100